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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9270
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 9009
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 1936
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 8847
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 3973
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3391
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 3699
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: MAOIST LEADER NEGATIVE ON EXTENDING CEASE-FIRE

REF: KATHMANDU 2556

Classified By: CDA Elisabeth I. Millard, Reason 1.4 (b/d)

Agreement with Parties against Autocratic Monarchy

¶1. (SBU) In a November 24 interview published on the official Maoist website and a November 27 interview with BBC's Nepali Service, Maoist leader Prachanda explained the benefits of the Parties-Maoist understanding (reftel). Prachanda called the understanding an agreement that was the "preliminary working unity between the political parties that want democracy." He added that the agreement was intended "to raise a storm against the autocratic monarchy." He told the BBC that his party was waiting for the King's response. In both interviews, however, he indicated that the agreement was not meant to make any kind of compromise with the Palace. In what could be a departure from the understanding, which provided that the Maoists would turn over their arms to a UN or international organization during constituent assembly elections, Prachanda told the BBC that the question of arms would be settled after the election results. He also remarked that "arms can be settled by reorganizing the armed forces of both sides."

No Decision on Extending the Cease-Fire

¶2. (C) Although saying that his party had not yet decided whether to break or extend the cease-fire, due to end December 3, Prachanda laid the groundwork to break it. In his November 24 interview, he asserted that "the way this feudal autocratic system and its royal group is killing our unarmed cadres and people, detaining and terrorizing people and how it has used our cease-fire to expand its army camps and how it is claiming to have established peace, it is compelling us to take a harsh decision." He noted that breaking the cease-fire would not affect the Maoists' agreement with the Parties. CPN-UML Central Committee member Kashi Nath Adhikari told us that he concurred - a Maoist compulsion to break the cease-fire would not affect the Maoist-Parties understanding. However, he admitted that it would make matters more difficult. In contrast, Minendra Rijal, spokesperson for Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D), acknowledged that if the Maoists did not extend the

cease-fire, it would be very difficult for the Parties to work with the Maoists. He explained that the Parties' understanding was based on the Maoists professed desire to move ahead peacefully; if the Maoists broke the cease-fire before constituent assembly elections the Parties would lose trust in the Maoists.

Maoists Silent on Future of Monarchy

¶3. (C) Prachanda evaded direct questions on whether the Maoists would accept a ceremonial or constitutional monarch, but claimed that the Maoists were "ready to accept the result of free, fair and peaceful elections to the constituent assembly." Party leaders and other commentators have inferred from his response that the Maoists would accept a ceremonial monarch if the King agreed to allow constituent assembly elections and the people voted to retain the monarchy. Rijal told us the Maoists had become more flexible and wanted to rejoin the political mainstream. He advocated encouragement of, and engagement with, the Maoists. Prachanda noted his belief that people of the 21st century would not vote in favor of the king. He continued to emphasize that his party has not abandoned its goal of a republic and said that its demand for a constituent assembly was "unconditional."

Comment

¶4. (C) Prachanda's recent public statements underline that the Maoists have not committed to renounce violence. Rather, Prachanda seems to see a future with Maoists having weapons throughout and beyond any election process. If the Maoists break their cease-fire, the understanding with the political parties could falter and the seven-party alliance itself could splinter. In addition, the Parties could be at greater risk for government action on the charge of collaborating with terrorists seeking the violent overthrow of the government -- a charge most Nepalis would probably support.

MILLARD